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ABSTRACT

This handbook provides instructions to help communities form county rural development (CRD) committees. Guidelines are applicable to committee work in general and to community involvement in identifying and discussing local problems, determining community needs, setting goals, identifying available resources, securing adequate leadership, and coordinating local program efforts. The handbook is used as a reference book for community volunteers and U.S. Department of Agriculture agency employees who work with county Rural Development Committees in Alabama. Topics include description of CRD committee structure and relationships with local, state, and federal agencies and organizations; guidelines for committee membership, size, election of officers, composition and duties of subcommittees; suggestions for conduct of meetings and bylaws; and a program development outline describing planning, implementation, evaluation, and reporting processes. Appendices offer guidelines for working effectively with committees, requirements for good committee work, suggestions for planning and conducting committee and business meetings, instructions for use of parliamentary procedure, sample meeting agenda, checklist of steps to more effective meetings, and a plan of action guide. (LFL)

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County Rural Development Committee Handbook

Suggestions For Committee And Organizational Operation

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Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, Auburn University, AL 36849

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County Rural Development Committee Handbook

Suggestions For Committee And Organizational Operation

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Introduction

This handbook was prepared for the Alabama Agriculture Rural Development Council to further the work of County Rural Development (CRD) committees in Alabama.

The Alabama Rural Development Council (RDC) was organized in the mid-1960s to help coordinate the rural development programs of its member agencies and to assist local citizens' groups in defining and implementing projects designed to develop human, economic, and natural resources.

In 1982, the secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture called for the establishment of a Food and Agriculture Council (FAC) in each state to coordinate the department's various multi-agency programs. The secretary also directed the FAC to develop a rural development committee. The Alabama FAC, organized in 1982, requested that the existing RDC assume all rural development responsibilities in the state.

County Rural Development committees are local, countywide, and primarily unincorporated groups which are not formally affiliated with any local, regional, state, or federal agency or organization. They provide a forum for local people to:

- identify and discuss problems, issues, and concerns;
- determine community needs and set appropriate goals;
- identify available resources and provide or secure adequate leadership;
- coordinate local program efforts.

CRD committees should be concerned with all social and economic problems facing counties and communities.

There are several ways to effectively organize and operate CRD commmittees. This handbook offers suggestions on how your county committee can better promote and stimulate resource development to make rural and urban communities more wholesome and desirable places in which to live, work, and play. It is also intended to serve as a reference book for USDA agency employees and community volunteers who, through their CRD committees, work to enhance community development.

The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service and USDA agencies at the county, state, and federal levels are committed to supporting CRD committees.

County Rural Development Committee Handbook

Suggestions For Committee And Organizational Operation

County Rural Development Committees

Community resource development is a process—not just a specific project, event, or program. It is a process which brings about needed changes in communities. The desire to change a local situation is basic to successful community development efforts.

Determining the changes needed in a community and making those changes is the responsibility of local citizens. The people most affected by an issue or problem should be involved in the actions designed to bring about change.

The CRD committee organizes the cooperative efforts of local citizens, local government officials, USDA agencies, and other community organizations in developing programs designed to meet the needs and goals of the local community.

Membership on the CRD committee should consist of local community leaders and a representative from each USDA agency in the county. CRD committee officers are normally selected from persons other than USDA agency personnel serving on the committee. Presently, the county Extension agent is asked to serve as the secretary, but other approaches have been successfully used in several counties.

Representatives from county USDA and state agencies are asked to provide organizational support and technical assistance to the committee. An environment of cooperation and teamwork is essential if progress is to be made. County CRD committees also serve as County Resource Conservation and Development committees for many counties.

In some counties, the CRD committee is the Overall Economic Development Planning (OEDP) committee recognized by the Economic Development Administration as the local planning and decision-making group for economic development. As such, the CRD committee frequently develops, with the aid of the regional planning agency, a statement identifying resources, analyzing problems, stating long-range goals, and stating a broad plan of action for economic development.

The CRD committee also makes an Annual Plan of Action (APA) which reflects projects that the CRD committee or its cooperating organizations will focus on for that year. The number of projects may range from 2 to 20.

After studying the APA, cooperating agencies, groups, or organizations may find that certain CRD committee goals and programs relate to their particular responsibilities or capabilities. As a result, these groups may adopt certain projects or portions of projects to help support the CRD committee's efforts.

CRD committees also make annual progress reports to the Alabama-USDA Rural Development Council. The council uses these reports to evaluate program efforts, make policy decisions affecting rural Alabama, and to give recognition to outstanding committees.

The Alabama-USDA Rural Development Council

The Alabama-USDA Rural Development Council is composed of the directors of USDA state agencies and other related public organizations at the state level. Membership, other than USDA, is by invitation of the USDA agency directors. A current membership list may be obtained from several state agencies, including the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service.

The Alabama-USDA Rural Development Council supports CRD committees by:

a. Providing guidance and training to county USDA and CRD committee personnel in the areas of education, technical assistance, and organizational and leadership development.

b. Acting as a liaison between CRD committees and public and private agencies and organizations at the local, state, and national levels.

c. Promoting communication and cooperation between individual agencies and groups.

CRD Committee Membership

The CRD committee should be composed of people who represent a variety of local interests and all segments of the county's population. Every member should be willing and able to contribute to the planning and implementing of programs.

Community leaders and representatives from education, agriculture, health, business, industry, organized labor, city and public service organizations, local and regional public agencies, and many other groups and organizations are potential candidates for membership on CRD committees. Youth, women, and minority group representatives contribute to a balanced committee membership.

It is also important to have active participation by elected officials from city and county governments. If this is not possible, these officials should be kept informed of committee accomplishments. Local governments usually provide much of the support for community improvement programs.

Relationships With Other Groups

Although initially sponsored and supported by the USDA, CRD committees, as previously mentioned, are not formally affiliated with any local, regional, state, or federal agency. However, good relations with other groups and agencies can help eliminate duplication, enhance cooperation, and encourage citizens to help solve problems in their county. The key is cooperation, not competition.

Local private groups such as industrial development associations, chambers of commerce, and others with common development goals can complement the work of the CRD committee. Community organizations such as women's clubs and civic groups can help with publicity, promotional activities, surveys, and other projects. Members of such groups also make excellent CRD committee members.

Representatives of state and federal agencies with county offices (Pensions and Security, Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, etc.) are vi tally interested in the development of the county. These representatives can provide expert services and they are also good prospective committee members. Their knowledge about the problems and needs of the county and their contacts with state, regional, and national offices make them valuable resource people, especially in the work of subcommittees.

Committee Size

Committee size is influenced by many factors, including the county's population, different interests, and problems. The CRD committee structure is very flexible and can accommodate all who want to be active. Membership may range from 5 to 20. But the larger the committee, the more difficult it is to keep all members involved at one time.

A working group of about 25 is usually the largest size which can effectively function on a regular basis. The committee, however, should be large enough to ensure sufficient attendance for conducting business and getting broad representation and participation.

Election Of Officers And Replacement Of Members

Each local CRD committee elects its own officers and develops a procedure for replacing members and changing officers. A nominating committee should present a recommended slate of officers during the fall. These officers will then be organized and ready to begin work by January 1.

The nominating committee can also review committee membership each year and make suggestions for changes. All members who accept a leadership position should understand their roles and responsibilities. Committee leaders should also have opportunities to develop the skills necessary to do a good job.

To aid in planning, reporting, and coordinating with other agencies and groups, it is recommended that the committee year be on a calendar basis—January 1 through December 31.

Subcommittees

The heart of most large CRD committees is the work of their subcommittees. Subcommittees involve the committee membership in specific programs, activities, and projects. There is no rule dictating the number of special or standing subcommittees. The number should, however, reflect the actual interest and emphasis of the parent committee. While some subcommittees may be needed this year, the same need may not exist next year.

Types Of Subcommittees

Sometimes it is best to form *ad hoc subcommittees* to work on specific projects and then disband the subcommittees when their projects have been completed or abandoned. Also, persons may be invited to participate on subcommittees even if they are not members of the overall CRD committee. This approach allows the committee to expand its capabilities.

Another approach, and the one used by most CRD committees, is to organize *standing subcom-*

mittees in a few major areas of interest. These subcommittees are charged with planning, investigating, and overseeing program development.

When specific problems or projects arise, an ad hoc subcommittee is formed with a nucleus from the appropriate standing subcommittee. Others, who may or may not be members of the CRD committee and who have special interests and/or expertise in a particular area may also serve on an ad hoc subcommittee.

This system helps to avoid overworking some CRD committee members and neglecting others. Another advantage of such an approach is that it appeals to local citizens who may have special interests and expertise but who may not want to serve on a permanent basis.

Number Of Subcommittees

The number of standing subcommittees should be dictated by the county or community situation. Some counties may need to establish subcommittees to carry out specific work assignments. *Subcommittees should only be developed if there is a legitimate need for them.* Listed below are examples of the types of standing subcommittees that have been used:

- Business and Economic Development
- Transportation
- Recreation and Tourism
- Intergovernmental Relations
- Community Facilities and Services
- Comprehensive Planning
- Education and Training
- Housing
- Health Facilities and Services
- Community Youth Development
- Agriculture and Natural Resources

Subcommittee Membership

Members of subcommittees are usually appointed by the CRD committee chairperson, acting on the advice of active members or according to the bylaws of the CRD committee.

Membership should be kept small enough for a smooth operation, yet large enough to reflect diverse opinions and ensure good attendance at meetings.

Subcommittee Reports

The full CRD committee or executive committee (whichever meets regularly) should be kept well informed of subcommittee activities, progress, problems, needs, proposals, etc., through brief oral or written reports presented at CRD meetings. Accurate minutes of subcommittee meetings should also be submitted to the CRD committee secretary.

CRD Committee Meetings

An active CRD committee should meet regularly. This can be monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly. However, observations of CRD committees during the past 20 years show that committees which meet monthly are not only the most active but also the most effective.

One of the most important functions of the CRD committee is to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of problems and ideas. This forum cannot be effective if meetings are irregular and infrequent. If the whole committee does not meet on a monthly basis, the executive committee (officers, subcommittee chairpersons, and other key people) should meet monthly.

Subcommittees working on specific projects should meet as often as needed to maintain momentum. Subcommittees can meet with the executive committee at any time to discuss specific problems.

If the executive committee meets regularly, it should call a meeting of the full committee once or twice a year to make progress reports, get new ideas, have programs approved, and hear reports on changing community needs. These meetings are good for recognizing outstanding work by individuals and subcommittees.

The time of the committee meeting should accommodate a majority of the members. There should be a regularly scheduled meeting so members can plan to attend. It is also good to have a regular meeting place that is convenient and comfortable. Meetings should not be lengthy; special meetings can be held when an item requires extra time.

Agenda And Notices

An agenda for each meeting should be planned well ahead of time by the chairperson. The secretary should send an advance copy of the agenda and a meeting notice to all members. Written notices or reminders of CRD committee meetings should be sent about one week in advance and should include the date, time, and place of the meeting.

A meeting notice should also be placed in the last issue of the local weekly newspaper prior to the meeting. This notice is primarily for members, but it will also let the public know what the committee is doing. For those counties with access to radio stations, announcements should go on the

air two or three days before the meeting and on the day of the meeting. Published reports of meetings and activities can also help stimulate community interest.

Minutes

Minutes of the full CRD committee and executive committee meetings should be kept by the secretary. Copies of the minutes should be sent to each member within a few days following each meeting. If this is not possible, the minutes should be sent with the announcement and agenda for the next meeting. Minutes that are sent early provide a written reminder or notice of committee assignments.

Subcommittee chairpersons should be responsible for minutes and reports of their group's activities. These reports should be passed on to the CRD committee chairperson and secretary.

Bylaws

Constitutional bylaws that are not too restrictive can be an asset. Bylaws should spell out:

a. the committee's name and purpose;

b. when and where the committee meets;

c. the committee's relationship to other community organizations and local governments;

d. the committee's organizational structure;

e. how officers and subcommitties are selected, their terms of office, duties, and responsibilities;

f. how membership is determined;

g. other guidelines that the committee feels are beneficial.

Program Development Outline

The CRD committee plans and initiates county changes and improvements through the problem-solving process. This process consists of planning, implementation, and evaluation.

I. PLANNING.

The committee, representing all major interests and segments of the county population, assesses present and future needs and develops plans to satisfy those needs on a priority basis.

A. PROBLEM AND RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION. Identify the resources, problems, and needs of the county or community.

1. Gather all studies and data (U.S. Census, comprehensive plans, etc.) that have been compiled on the county's resources, problems, and future potential. Consider all aspects of community life, including land use, transportation, economic needs, and community services.

2. Conduct surveys, interviews, and public hearings with individuals and groups in the county to determine their opinions of county needs.

3. Develop a list of the needs and problems of the county or community.

4. Use outside resource people to help with community planning and development problems.

B. PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT. After weighing alternative solutions to the problems on the list, establish a few realistic priorities. Progess should be made on the priority problems before work begins on others. Although you should consider enough projects to involve everyone who wants to be involved, a few successful, well-planned projects are better than a large number of ineffective ones. Outside organizations and agencies may be willing to undertake some projects.

C. PLAN OF ACTION. After priorities have been established, a CRD committee plan of action should be developed for the year. The form in Appendix H will be helpful for developing a plan of action. If the committee decides to work on more than one problem area or to delegate a problem area to another organization, a plan of action should be prepared for each goal.

1. Identify and describe the problem.

2. Develop attainable and measurable objectives for each problem area. These objectives should be supported by the majority of the county or community. Before any goals are set, the committee should determine public sentiment.

3. Decide what specific actions are necessary to achieve the objectives. Examples of such actions include publicity programs, community meetings, surveys, fund drives, revenue increases, and the passage of beneficial legislation. Often, a project will include so many specific actions that it will span several years.

4. Determine the organizations, agencies, or individuals who will be responsible for performing the actions. This may be one or more individuals, local governing bodies, civic groups, youth groups, local offices of state or federal agencies, or a combination of several of these. The committee should motivate and encourage those involved, inform the public, and solicit the public's support and assistance. The committee may form an ad hoc subcommittee to coordinate the activities of those working on the project.

5. Prepare a schedule giving target dates for accomplishing specific actions. Although it may have to be changed, a schedule is necessary for evaluating progress.

D. DISTRIBUTION OF PLAN. Several copies of the overall plan should be prepared. The committee

secretary should furnish a copy to each committee member and to other appropriate people and organizations. Subcommittee chairpersons should be familiar with the plans and priorities set by the CRD committee so they can lead their groups in implementing the plan of action.

County representatives of USDA agencies should send a copy of the CRD committee's annual plan of action to their district coordinators. Plans from each county should also be sent by the CRD committee secretary to all area and regional organizations serving the county and to the secretary of the Alabama-USDA Council (Director, Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, Auburn University), who will then make copies available to state council members. This will enable everyone involved in community resource development to coordinate and develop area, regional, and state policy and support programs.

II. IMPLEMENTATION.

The committee plan is put into action, the objective is realized, and the problem is solved.

A. GATHERING RESOURCES. The subcommittee or ad hoc subcommittee responsible for implementing a project should gather all of its available resources. Every possible source of assistance should be used from within and outside of the county.

B. COMMITMENTS FOR ACTION. After the CRD committee locates its sources of help, it should work to gain a definite commitment from each of them.

C. CONTINUED COOPERATION. To ensure success, the subcommittee members should continue to work with the groups or agencies that have committed themselves to the objective. The subcommittee should also communicate regularly with the CRD committee and encourage cooperation and continued support.

III. EVALUATION AND REPORTING.

The committee reviews its progress and reports to the public and to the appropriate agency officials.

A. ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT. Any effective problem-solving process requires periodic analysis and evaluation. One time each year, the county CRD committee should review, discuss, and evaluate its progress. A progress report should be submitted to the public in the same form used for the plan of action. If complete success has not been achieved in reaching the committee's objectives, degrees of progress can still be measured by:

1. Studies and surveys made in developing projects.

2. Community conferences, meetings, and workshops sponsored by the committee.

3. Groups organized to become effective forces for community development.

4. Programs or projects for which plans are completed or in progress.

5. Intermediate steps, phases, or actions completed towards reaching a specific goal.

6. Employment opportunities increased and income generated as a result of committee activity.

7. Community facilities or services developed as a result of committee activity.

8. Major developments initiated by the committee that can be directly related to improved living standards but not necessarily having economic implications for the community.

Annual project progress reports should be sent to the secretary of the Alabama-USDA Rural Development Council (Director, Alabama Cooperative Extension Service) at the time determined and announced each year by the state council chairperson. Copies of annual progress reports should be sent to committee members, local elected officials, and those organizations working with the committee or working on a phase of the overall program.

B. OEDP REPORTS. In many counties, the CRD committee serves as the Overall Economic Development Planning committee and prepares the county's Overall Economic Development Plan (OEDP). Annual progress reports and OEDP updates are required of all counties if they are to remain eligible for public works grants and loans from the Economic Development Administration (EDA). In some areas of the state where there are EDA-designated districts, the Regional Planning and Development commissions make annual reports, and county CRD committees contribute to this report to satisfy EDA requirements. Each year, the EDA office in Montgomery sends a letter to all counties requesting OEDP updates and giving instructions for reporting. The letters are usually sent to the county commission chairman or probate judge who may designate a county organization to develop a report. Many times, the CRD committee is given this task. For more information, you may call Mr. Wayne Burnett at (205) 832-7008 or write to:

Economic Development
Administration Representative
The Aronov Building, Room 134
474 South Court Street
Montgomery, AL 36104.

C. PUBLIC REPORTS. Committee officers, sub-

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committee chairpersons, and professionals associated with CRD committees must keep the public informed of the committee's activities and progress. This can be accomplished through the use of the local news media (photographs, feature articles, interviews, tapes, etc.) as well as through presentations to local civic clubs, school organizations, community clubs, farm groups, and others. Field trips and tours can also be effective.

D. MINUTES. A detailed set of minutes for each committee and subcommittee meeting provides an excellent and convenient source of information for evaluating committee accomplishments and submitting progress reports to the state CRD committee. When included in the more formal annual progress reports, minutes provide a chronological report of committee activities. Good minutes, when distributed regularly, are also excellent reports to the membership. Committee members are more likely to remain interested and active if they are regularly informed of their committee's status and accomplishments.

Recognition

Each year, the Alabama-USDA Rural Development Council recognizes 12 outstanding county CRD committees. Six committees receive awards for outstanding accomplishments, and six receive certificates of achievement for their community and rural development work. One of the 12 is named the state's most outstanding committee.

The selection process is very simple. All county CRD committees (except the preceding year's most outstanding selection) are encouraged to submit applications for consideration. The local committee's secretary must submit the application along with support materials to the district Extension office. The district office then sends the reports to the Regional Mid-Management Committee where the top two reports are selected.

Twelve committee reports (two per region) are then sent to the Alabama-USDA Rural Development Council for the final selection. The results are announced at an annual awards program planned by the state council. This procedure may change from year to year, but all county committees will be told far enough in advance to make any necessary changes.

Local CRD committees should also hold their own recognition programs. Successful award programs are being held at annual membership meetings in some Alabama counties.

Summary

The county CRD committee is a unique volunteer citizen's group. The committee is usually comprised of 15 to 20 active members who are representatives of the various private and public interests in the county. The committee provides a forum for local people to identify and discuss problems, issues, concerns; determine community needs and set appropriate goals; identify available resources and provide or secure adequate leadership; and coordinate program efforts.

Although Alabama, like other states, is faced with many educational, social, economic, and political uncertainties, it still has a bright and progressive future. However, Alabama's future success will depend largely on the abilities of local citizens who are willing to identify the needs and solve the problems of their communities. The mission of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service and other USDA agencies is to provide organizational and leadership guidance and to be responsive to the needs of the community through the county CRD committee.

As technical support groups, Extension and cooperating USDA agencies maintain a firm commitment to the continued support and survival of the county CRD committee.

How To Work Effectively With Committees

How do committees function in your organization? Do they contribute to its effectiveness and productivity? Do members willingly serve on committees? Is the workload evenly distributed and are all members actively involved? If your answers to these questions are *yes,* then committee work in your organization rates high. Committees can influence the growth and prestige of an organization and determine how well it accomplishes its goals.

What Is A Committee?

A committee is a group of people selected from an organization or group to study or act on a particular matter.

The organization sets limits within which a committee must operate. These limits include the committee's *task,* length of *time* for the job, available *resources,* and the *purposes* and *policies* of the organization.

Why Have Committees?

Two basic reasons for committees are to help an organization accomplish its work and to develop leadership among members. Committees can accomplish much of an organization's work because:

1. They allow individuals to work in their special areas of interest.

2. They enable an organization to benefit directly from the experience and abilities of more members.

3. More member participation results in member support and a commitment to an organization's goals.

4. The informality and procedures of a committee provide a better working atmosphere than large groups.

5. A small group can operate more effectively than a large one when a range of alternatives must be screened or when delicate or embarrassing subjects must be discussed.

6. Committees work for the organization between meetings of the larger group.

7. Committees provide the information needed to make decisions.

A committee may also be a training ground for the organization's future leaders. The small number of people on a committee enables each member to play an active part.

Types Of Committees

Standing committees handle a specific part of the organization's ongoing work. Terms of office for standing committee members usually coincide with that of the organization's officers. Most organizations need only a few standing committees. The membership committee, the finance committee, and the program committee are among the standing committees found in many volunteer organizations.

Special committees or *ad hoc committees* perform a specific short-term task. When the job is finished, the committee is disbanded. These committees enable the organization to involve additional members in assignments for which they have special interests. A special committee's purpose is not defined in the organization's standing rules. A motion to appoint a standing committee should state the committee's job, the number of members, and the method of appointment.

Requirements For Good Committee Work

Three basic requirements for successful committee work include the *right problem,* the *right people,* and the *right process.*

The Right Problem

A problem that is recognized by the whole organization and clearly defined to the committee is the basis for productive work. With special committees, the problem or need usually has been recognized. However, unless the organization periodically reviews its need for standing committees, some of them may be unnecessary.

The problem or assignment must be clearly defined for both special and standing committees. The committee should be given written instructions, including a clear statement of the assignment. Some organizations use an instruction sheet which includes:

- Name of the committee
- Type of committee (standing or special)
- Committee's purpose
- Specific duties and responsibilities
- Names of chairperson and members
- Time of reporting
- Budget

Written instructions, however, do not relieve the president and the chairperson of their responsi-

bility of instructing the committee. Instead, written instructions should reinforce the committee's purpose.

The Right People

After the need for the committee has been defined, the next step is selecting members—matching committee requirements with the best people for the assignment. Usually, the president appoints committees, many times with the help of the executive committee.

Consider these factors when selecting committee members:

1. Which members are interested in the committee's task or have the special information or skills the committee needs?

2. Which members could benefit most in terms of personal development?

3. Which members might become more committed to the organization's goals?

4. Which members are already overloaded with other assignments?

5. Which members work well as part of a team?

When selecting committee members, the president and the executive committee should also:

• DETERMINE HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE NEEDED. The bylaws may specify this for standing committees. For special committees, it is sometimes included in the motion authorizing the committee. However, in many cases, this decision is left to the presiding officer. The committee's assignment is the major consideration in determining the number of members. Some assignments require a large committee which represents all major interests in the organization. Other work may be accomplished with a much smaller group—3 to 5 members. Since group discussion and sharing ideas are important in committee work, 5 to 15 members make a productive group for most assignments.

• LIST PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS AND SELECT THE BEST QUALIFIED AS CHAIRPERSON. Select the chairperson because of his or her ability to organize the members into a working group. He or she may or may not be the person with the most knowledge of the committee's topic. Obtain consent of the prospective chairperson to serve in this role. Select other members, considering any suggestions the chairperson may make, and get their consent to serve. Sometimes people in volunteer organizations hesitate to accept committee assignments. Minimize this reluctance by using a positive approach when contacting prospective members. Members usually accept assignments when presiding officers are honest about the job requirements and help the individual understand why he or she is needed.

The Right Process

For a committee to be productive, each member must make a maximum contribution. If the committee is not oriented and instructed properly at its appointment, this should be done at the first meeting. The group should agree on intermediate goals and working procedures.

The president of the parent organization should know about all committee meetings and should attend whenever possible. An exception to this rule is the nominating committee meeting. The nominating committee is elected, and the president should not attend its meetings.

Because of the size and informal atmosphere, committees usually do not use parliamentary procedure. Members should, however, adhere to the intent of parliamentary rules. Decisions should be made in a democratic manner and on the basis of full information and free discussion. The committee chairperson may take part in the discussion but he or she should not dominate.

The chairperson sees that the committee accomplishes its task. However, success depends on the group's ability to work as a team. The following points can help make committee work a satisfying, productive effort:

• PROVIDE AN INFORMAL MEETING PLACE. A small room with table and chairs permits a face-to-face working arrangement. A chalkboard is useful for recording points under consideration.

• PREPARE A WRITTEN AGENDA. The chairperson plans the agenda based on what should be accomplished and on suggestions by committee members. A committee agenda should be more flexible than an agenda for larger group meetings.

• PREPARE FOR COMMITTEE WORK. Good preparation includes planning meetings at convenient times, giving advance notice of meetings, providing members a copy of the agenda or other assignments for study before the meeting, and arranging for resources needed by the committee.

• DELEGATE RESPONSIBILITIES. Responsibilities carried out during meetings may include the duties of secretary, chalkboard recorder, timekeeper, summarizer, evaluator, and resource advisor. Responsibilities for tasks to be done between committee meetings may also be assigned to specific members.

• HELP MEMBERS PARTICIPATE. The chairperson should encourage those who hesitate to contribute and should restrict others who tend to dominate.

Members participate more readily when the meeting is informal and relaxed.

TAKE GOOD MINUTES. Minutes should include decisions and actions taken and should provide enough detail to reflect the tone of the session. For this reason, choose the committee secretary for his or her ability to recognize and record useful information.

- PREPARE AND SUBMIT REPORTS REQUESTED BY THE ORGANIZATION. Standing committees usually make recommendations and give progress and annual reports. Special committees make final reports but they may also make progress reports, and recommendations. The chairperson usually reports orally with a written copy provided for the secretary's records. Written copies of annual and final committee reports should always be submitted. Some organizations use a form to help committees report their work. The form includes:

a. Name of committee
b. Date committee was appointed
c. Chairperson and number of members
d. Brief description of how the work was done
e. What the committee found and conclusions reached
f. Recommended follow-up action by the organization

Committee reports which include this information provide the organization with a good basis for action on recommendations. The final results of most committee work are achieved only when the organization takes appropriate action on the report. Organizations may act on committee reports in different ways. Reports may be:

- RECEIVED OR FILED. The organization is not committed to recommendations of the committee when reports are handled this way. Progress reports may be received without a vote. The chairperson may merely acknowledge receipt of the report and ask the secretary to file it.
- ADOPTED OR APPROVED. This action binds the organization to the entire report, including opinions, conclusions, and recommendations.
- REJECTED. The organization may accept or reject all or any part of the report.
- PRESENTED AND ACTION POSTPONED. A decision on a report can be postponed, but the date for reconsideration should be specified.
- RETURNED TO COMMITTEE. The organization may feel more work or information is needed before final action.
- REFERRED. A report may be referred to the executive board or to another committee. For example, a report may need to be studied to determine if it reflects the organization's policies. Or, a financial report may be referred to the auditing committee.

Summary

Everyone profits from good committee work. The organization reaches more of its goals, future leaders receive valuable training, and committee members enjoy the satisfaction of a job well done. However, good committee work does not just happen; it comes from much study and effort. Every organization should consider how its committee work can be improved.

Planning And Holding Productive Meetings

The success of a meeting usually depends on the person or persons who plan and preside over it. These people know when to call a meeting, how to plan, organize, and conduct meetings, and how to achieve productive results. Productive meetings require good preparation, objectivity, decisiveness, proper management, follow-up, and willing participants.

Many people would rather not attend meetings. They see meetings only as an inconvenience—something that interrupts their regular routine. There are at least four types of meeting participants or non-participants:

1. The *meeting maker* sees meetings as a solution to everything. His or her main objective is to organize and play the leading role in one meeting after another.

2. The *meeting minder* constantly hurries from one meeting to another, week after week.

3. The *meeting moaner* feels forced to come to the meeting and thinks that all meetings are a necessary evil.

4. The *meeting misser* is the one who is invited but manages to avoid most meetings with great regularity.

Fortunately, there is one other type of participant. This is the person who selects the right meetings to attend, makes a valuable contribution, and benefits from having attended the meeting.

Calling A Meeting

Meetings can be a high-risk activity. Confrontations and disagreements can be common and frequent. As the meeting manager, you cannot guarantee a motivated, cooperative, and knowledgeable group. Nevertheless, you can make sure that those items under your direct control—preparation, management, and follow-up—are well planned and executed.

Before organizing a meeting, you should ask yourself:

- Is there a real need for a meeting?
- What do I hope to accomplish with this meeting?
- What is the purpose of the meeting?
- What are the short- and long-term results I am looking for?
- What action or reaction do I hope to create?

Planning The Meeting

If your organization has no written objectives, then you have a perfect subject for your next meeting. After the group has agreed on objectives, subsequent meetings should then be developed around those goals.

Many times, it is difficult for voluntary or occasional group leaders to agree on basic definitions. So, when planning a meeting, make sure everyone speaks the same language. Planning is a good place to start:

1. PLANNING—Thinking into the future, designing specific activities toward achieving thought-out objectives.

2. OBJECTIVES—Long-range, broad statements of direction.

3. GOALS—Short-range, specific, time-oriented reference points by which you can see how well you are achieving your objectives.

4. POLICY—Statements to guide action, plans, and programs.

5. PROCEDURES—Step-by-step descriptions of how to perform a job or function.

6. PRACTICES—Courses of action established on a recurring basis.

7. PROGRAM—Specifically, who, when, how, what, and where something is to be done.

The Meeting Agenda

The agenda, if organized and used properly, is a road map to help you through the meeting process.

1. For the organization, the agenda makes it easier to:

   a. Expedite effective production.

   b. Protect items which do not meet the purpose of a particular meeting from being introduced.

   c. Protect items the group is not ready to discuss from being introduced.

   d. Give order and direction to the group's work.

   e. Indicate the relationship of items.

2. For the leader, the agenda can help:

   a. Plan the work to be done.

   b. Allot the available time to necessary items.

c. Set an open or workable atmosphere.

d. Give an opportunity to distribute leadership among the group.

e. Provide a meeting plan satisfactory to the group.

f. Gain acceptance as a member of the group.

g. Establish bounds for discussion.

3. For the member, the agenda can help:

a. Provide an opportunity to bring pertinent items before the group.

b. Serve as a guide for participation.

c. Offer an opportunity to work as a team.

d. Be better prepared to participate.

Even with an agenda, the group may still have to set priorities to avoid a lengthy meeting and to get through the entire agenda without omitting important items. To avoid these kinds of problems, get suggestions for agenda items by mail, phone, or at a planning meeting. Any proposed agenda item should indicate the time and resources needed. After the deadline date for submitting topics, the agenda should be written (subject to approval by the president or chairperson).

When putting the agenda together, follow these guidelines:

a. List items in the order to be taken up.

b. Indicate the time needed for each item.

c. Suggest committee decisions where needed.

d. Mail tentative agenda to members.

e. Finalize the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.

Conducting A Meeting

A productive meeting has six basic parts:

1. OPENING. Begin on time! Put everyone at ease. Everyone should become acquainted if the group is small enough. The meeting manager should state the purpose of the meeting and define the group rules.

2. PRESENTATION OF TOPICS. Each item to be discussed at the meeting should be reviewed by giving background information and stating the facts. Use visual aids, charts, case studies, demonstrations, or anything else that will make it easier for the participants to grasp the situation quickly.

3. CONDUCT OF MEETING. A good meeting manager will control the discussion and not let his or her personal feelings cause conflicts. The meeting manager should also encourage participation, keep the discussion on track, and summarize frequently by analyzing and restating the views expressed. There are many ways to get people involved in a meeting. Go around the room and get each person's ideas, ask for responses, or call on a person by name and ask for a reaction.

4. CLOSE OF MEETING. This is the time to recap what has happened. Summarize the main points of the meeting, explain what has been accomplished, and announce the follow-up. Thank the participants for their contributions and finish on a positive statement—and on time.

5. FOLLOW-UP. Effective follow-up is essential to the success of a meeting. Everyone who has been given an assignment should agree on it and understand it. Those who follow up on assignments should have the authority to do so. After the meeting, minutes should be prepared and sent to each person with his or her assignment clearly marked.

6. TAKING MINUTES. The minutes of a meeting should record what is done, not what is said. They should include:

a. Kind of meeting (regular or special)

b. Name of the organization

c. Date and place of meeting

d. Names of officers, members, and guests present

e. Approval of previous minutes

f. All reports and actions taken

g. All main motions carried or lost (omit those withdrawn)

h. All other motions carried and which contain information needed at a future meeting

i. Adjournment

Sample Agenda

ANY ALABAMA COUNTY CRD COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 1, 1985

I. Call to order

II. Reading and approval of minutes

III. Old business:

- A. Committee Reports
  1. Business and Economic Development
  2. Community Facilities and Services
  3. Recreation and Tourism
  4. Health and Safety
  5. Education and Training
  6. Forestry
  7. Agriculture and Land Use
- B. Other Old Business Besides Committee Reports

IV. New business:

- A. The identification and discussion of problems and needs
- B. Any other items warranting discussion

V. Announcements

- A. Next meeting date, time, and place
- B. Special requests or assignments from membership

VI. Adjournment

SPECIAL NOTE: The use of an agenda is always encouraged. It serves as an effective tool to guide your meeting in a progressive and productive fashion. A well-developed agenda can also increase citizen participation and ensure that all important items are included for discussion. The above agenda is intended only as a guide. Obviously, all of the committees listed may or may not accommodate the needs of your local situation.

Steps To More Effective Meetings

How well do you perform as a group or committee chairperson? Most of us have little or no idea of how we perform. The purpose of the following exercise is to give us some feedback. Answer each question honestly. Score 3 for Always, 2 for Sometimes, and 1 for Never.

STEPS	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. Do I know all the members of our committee, their backgrounds, and relevant skills, etc.?	_____	_____	_____
2. Do I know what our specific task is and when it should be completed?	_____	_____	_____
3. Do I know what resources are available to do our work and how to get more if necessary?	_____	_____	_____
4. Do I know the committee's assigned task and its importance to the organization?	_____	_____	_____
5. Do I know which other committees our committee must work with, make recommendations to, etc? If so, do I make this matter clear to all?	_____	_____	_____
6. Do I get all information to the members well in advance of the meeting?	_____	_____	_____
7. Is the time, place, and date of the meeting clear to all members? If there are any changes, do all members know about them?	_____	_____	_____
8. Have I checked the facilities at the meeting place?	_____	_____	_____
9. Do I know the manner or form in which our report must be given; and to whom and when, etc.?	_____	_____	_____
10. Do I know the formal and informal rules for conducting meetings?	_____	_____	_____
11. Have I prepared an agenda that will help the group do its work?	_____	_____	_____
12. Do members know how to get items on the agenda?	_____	_____	_____
13. Do I start meetings on time?	_____	_____	_____
14. Do I discuss questions to encourage participation?	_____	_____	_____
15. Do I help clarify issues?	_____	_____	_____
16. Do I encourage less vocal members to participate?	_____	_____	_____
17. Can I manage disagreements without becoming personally involved?	_____	_____	_____
18. Am I tolerant of members whose opinions I disagree with?	_____	_____	_____
19. Do I move quickly from topic to topic?	_____	_____	_____
20. Do I make the decisions reached clear to all?	_____	_____	_____
21. Do I make the assignment clear to those who must carry it out?	_____	_____	_____
22. Do all members know when the next meeting is scheduled?	_____	_____	_____
23. Do I end meetings on time?	_____	_____	_____

Scoring Scale: 58-72 Excellent, 43-57 Good, 36-42 Poor, 0-33 Very Poor

The Effective Use Of Parliamentary Procedure

Community groups and similar organizations often misunderstand the function of good parliamentary practices.

Used properly, parliamentary procedure is an effective tool for taking orderly action as a group. You can give full consideration to any matter of common interest, encourage common-sense discussion on each question, and act according to the will of the majority—all with a minimum waste of time. The purpose of parliamentary procedure is not to inject unnecessary formality into a meeting, or is it to prevent a free expression of opinion.

The following outline can help committee officers and members understand the basic parliamentary rules. It is intended as a brief and convenient guide, primarily for use in community group meetings. The outline does not cover the entire field of parliamentary law. For more complex parliamentary problems, refer to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.*

Motions

A *motion* is a request that something be done or it expresses the opinions or wishes of the assembly. There are several types of motions:

- A *main motion* introduces an action to the assembly for its consideration. Only one main motion should be placed before the assembly at one time. It is always debatable and amendable and ranks below all other motions.
- A *privileged motion* refers to the action of the assembly as a whole; example: take a recess, adjourn, etc. There are five privileged motions and they outrank all other motions.
- A *subsidiary motion* is a motion applied to other motions, usually the main motion, to alter, postpone, or temporarily dispose of the other motion or motions. There are seven of these motions. They rank below the privileged motions and above the main motion.
- An *incidental motion* is used in conducting business. It must be disposed of before action is taken on the motion out of which it arises. Example: motion to close nominations, point of order, method of voting.
- A *renewal motion* is one that brings back to the floor a motion that has been considered once, but which the assembly wants to consider again. Example: to reconsider, to take from table, to discharge a committee.

If a motion is *pending* it is on the floor but, as yet, not disposed of. Several motions may be on the floor at one time if they were made in order of ascending rank. When several motions are pending, the one made last is always disposed of first. Refer to the table at the end of this section for a further explanation of motions.

Order Of Motions

Motions have *rank* among themselves and some motions have *right-of-way* over others. Referring to the table at the end of this section, you will note that the privileged and subsidiary motions are numbered from 1 to 12. These motions have numerical rank, with 1 being the highest ranking motion. A main motion is the lowest ranking motion.

Incidental motions have no rank among themselves,but they take precedence or right-of-way over the motion out of which they arise. Renewal motions are similar to main motions because they cannot be acted upon until the floor is clear. The following example demonstates what is meant by *precedence:*

Main motion—*to buy a new car.*

Refer to a committee—*of 3, to investigate cars* (outranks main motion).

Lay on table—*table all pending motions* (outranks the above motion).

The table motion and the committee motion may be received while the main motion is on the floor.

Since the table motion was made *last,* it should be voted on *first.* The *Chair* will put the table motion. If it carries, the other two will be postponed until the next meeting. If it loses, the *Chair* considers the committee motion. If there is no further discussion, it will be put. If it carries, the floor is clear. If it loses, discussion will continue on the main motion. Note that subsidiary, privileged, and incidental motions may be made while the main motion is pending. They must, however, be considered in the proper order.

The Main Motion

A main motion is any motion that brings an item of business before the assembly. It requires the *action* of the assembly.

Examples:

a. "I move that we give $20.00 to the community chest."

b. "I move that this organization go on record as favoring the income tax reduction."

A main motion is always debatable and amendable.

Chair: "Mr. (or Ms.) A (who has risen or has raised a hand)."

Mr. or Ms. A: "I move that we send two delegates to the district convention."

Mr. or Ms. B, C, and D: "Seconded (several may second a motion)."

Chair: "It is moved and seconded that we send two delegates to the district convention. Is there any discussion?"

Debating—amending—making of subsidiary motions are in order at this time.

Member: "Question, question (does not stop, but speeds up discussion)."

Chair: "Question has been called. Are you ready for the question?" *(or)* "Are you ready for the vote?"

"All those in favor of the motion to send two delegates to district convention, raise your right hand; opposed, raise your right hand. The motion is carried *(or lost)*."

"Is there any further business?"

The Motion To Amend

The motion to amend is a subsidiary motion and is always applied to another motion, usually the main motion. The motion to amend may be used to add, to insert, to strike out, and to strike out and insert.

Example: Main motion—*to purchase blackboard.* While this motion is being discussed, an amendment is made to add the words, *costing $6.00 or less.*

Whenever possible, the *Chair* should ask the maker of the main motion to change it to include the amendment. It is done this way: "Mr. or Ms . . ., would you agree to include this amendment in your motion to add the words, costing $6.00 or less?" If he or she agrees, and the assembly does not object, the motion is amended. If any member objects, the amendment must be seconded, opened to discussion, or the amendment can be voted on like any other motion.

Always vote on the amendment *before* you vote on the motion to which the amendment is applied. The discussion of an amendment should always be about the amendment itself and not about the main motion. An amendment should never insert the word *not* in a motion to which it is applied since that would be the same as a negative vote.

A motion may be amended several times in succession; however, only two amendments can be applied to a motion at one time—a primary amendment and a secondary amendment. The secondary amendment must always apply directly to the primary one and not skip back to the main motion. Note the following example:

Main motion—*to purchase a table*

Primary amendment—*to insert oak before table*

Secondary amendment—*to insert blond before oak*

The Motion To Postpone

One method of postponing action on a main motion is to postpone it indefinitely. This motion *kills* the main motion, and it will have to be introduced again as a new motion at a future meeting.

A second method is to postpone the motion until a definite time, such as the next meeting. This motion is debatable and amendable and ranks above the motion to postpone indefinitely.

A third method of postponing action is to lay the main motion on the table. This motion is the highest ranking subsidiary motion and is not debatable or amendable. However, a statement may be made by the maker of the motion indicating the reason for laying the motion on the table.

It should be noted that under no circumstances can a motion be postponed or laid on the table beyond the next regular meeting (assuming that the meetings are held weekly or monthly).

A main motion may be postponed to another time at the same meeting in which it was made; likewise, a motion may be taken from the table at the same meeting in which it was laid on the table. In both instances, new information or the presence of additional members may be the cause for discussing the original motion again.

The Point Of Order Motion

A point of order motion is used to correct any errors in parliamentary procedure. Suppose that the motion "to buy a new chair" is on the floor. While it is being discussed, a member moves that "we send two delegates to the state convention." The chairperson receives the second motion. Since there should be only one main motion on the floor at a time, a member may rise to a point of order as follows:

Member: "Chairperson, I rise to a point of order."

Chair: "State your point of order."

Member: "The *Chair* has received a second main motion while another was on the floor; the second motion is out of order at this time."

Chair: "Your point is well taken; the second motion is out of order."

This motion may be made by rising and addressing the *Chair.* A member need not be recognized before speaking. He or she may interrupt a speaker who has the floor. The motion needs no second, no vote, and it is not debatable or amendable. It may be used to correct a member as well as the chairperson.

The Motion To Reconsider

When a member wishes to reconsider the vote on a motion that has been carried or lost, he or she moves to reconsider that motion. Let us say that the group voted "to purchase a movie projector." Later in the meeting, it is learned that the treasury does not have enough funds to pay for such an item. A member may then say, "I move to reconsider the vote on the motion to purchase a movie projector." It is seconded and discussed. If it carries, the original motion, "to purchase a projector," comes back to the floor for reconsideration.

It should be noted that only a member who voted on the *winning side* of a main motion may make the motion to reconsider. This means that only those members who voted for the purchase of a projector can move to reconsider that motion; it indicates that a member has had a change of mind. The motion to reconsider must be made on the same day or at the same meeting during which the motion being reconsidered was acted upon. If the group later wants to change a motion or reverse its action, the motion to repeal should be used.

The Motion To Refer To A Committee

The motion to refer to a committee is a subsidiary motion. It is generally applied to the main motion but may also be applied to a suggestion not stated as a specific motion. It is debatable and amendable and consists of four important elements:

1. Number of members
2. Method of selection
   a. volunteers
   b. appointed by *Chair*
   c. nominated by *Chair*
   d. nominated from floor and elected, if necessary
   e. named by the maker of motion
3. Type of report
   a. information
   b. recommendations
   c. motion for action
   d. perform a task
4. Time to report

The motion, properly stated, should be as follows: "I move that a committee of three be appointed by the *Chair* to obtain information on the cost of a blackboard and to report at the next meeting."

If the maker of the motion does not include all of the necessary information, the *Chair* should ask him or her to state the various elements to avoid considerable amending.

Table Of Motions

Motion	In order when another speaker has the floor	Requires a second	Debatable	Amendable	Vote required
Privileged					
1. Fix time for next meeting	No	Yes	No	Yes	Maj.
2. Adjourn	No	Yes	No	Yes	Maj.
3. Take a recess	No	Yes	No	Yes	Maj.
4. Point of privilege	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	None
5. Call for the orders of the day	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	None
Subsidiary					
6. Lay on the table	No	Yes	No	No	Maj.
7. Previous question (close debate)	No	Yes	No	No	⅔
8. Limit-extend debate	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	⅔
9. Postpone to a definite time	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.
(Special order)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	⅔
10. Refer to a committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.
11. Amendment to the main motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.
12. Postpone indefinitely	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.
Incidental					
A. Point of order	Yes	No	No	No	None
B. Appeal to the chair	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Maj.
C. Parliamentary inquiry	Yes	No	No	No	None
D. Point of information	Yes	No	No	No	None
E. Division of assembly	Yes	No	No	No	None
F. Close nominations	No	Yes	No	Yes	⅔
G. Re-open nominations	No	Yes	No	Yes	Maj.
H. Method of voting	No	Yes	No	Yes	⅔
I. Request to withdraw a motion	No	No	No	No	Maj.
J. Suspension of rules	No	Yes	No	No	⅔
K. Objection to consideration of a question	Yes	No	No	No	⅔
Renewal					
L. Reconsider	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Maj.
M. Take from table	No	Yes	No	No	Maj.
N. Repeal	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	⅔
O. Discharge a committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	⅔
Main Motion	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Maj.

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Conducting Committee Business

Informal discussion is nothing new in parliamentary procedure, but the Discussion 6-6 method (six persons discussing a problem for six minutes or any variation of number and time) is unique for groups of more than 15. Don Phillips, former president of Hillsdale College, devised this simple, effective plan.

Someone states, "I move that we discuss this problem informally by dividing the assembly into groups of six (five or four)." Seconded and discussed. The *Chair* then quickly gives specific instructions to the members to turn to their immediate neighbors and, in groups of five or six, talk over the problem. Each group selects a secretary-spokesperson who later reports the ideas of the group.

At the end of a specified time, the discussion is concluded by saying, "I move that we rise and report." This motion is seconded and voted upon. Then each secretary reports the conclusions of his or her group. With this method, every member has the opportunity to submit ideas. Many members who may never address the *Chair* or speak to the group as a whole will, under these circumstances, participate in discussion.

Discussion 6-6 is also an excellent way to find out the specific needs of the assembly and to get immediate action on a motion without turning it over to a committee.

Sometimes the entire group may want to discuss a motion informally. Then a motion such as, "I move we resolve into a committee of the whole to discuss the matter of changing our name" is in order. It is then seconded and debated. If carried, the group discussion is completed. Any member states, "I move that we rise and report." If carried, the assembly resumes its former status and takes action on the motion.

Some Do's And Don'ts

Chairperson

1. The chairperson should restate the motion clearly after it has been made and seconded: "It is moved and seconded that..."

2. When a motion requires a second, the chairperson should be sure it is seconded; a motion with no second should be ignored.

3. The chairperson should entertain only one main motion at a time.

4. Whenever possible, the chairperson should ask the member to state the motion before the member launches into a long discussion of it.

5. The chairperson should give the maker of the motion the first chance to discuss it.

6. The chairperson should not permit anyone to speak twice on a motion until all have had a chance to speak once.

7. When voting publicly, the chairperson should vote only when his or her vote will change the result. When voting secretly, the chairperson may vote when the assembly votes.

8. The chairperson should give up the chair only when his or her comments are vigorously for or against the motion; in this case, the vice chairperson or any other member may serve until the motion is disposed of.

Member

1. Except in small groups (less than 15), the members should be recognized by the *Chair* before speaking.

2. Whenever possible, the member should try to state his or her ideas in the form of a motion.

3. The member should say, "I move," rather than, "I make a motion."

4. The member may *second* a motion, make a *nomination,* call *question,* or call *division* (recount vote) without rising or being recognized by the *Chair.*

5. The member should never be compelled to vote or to serve when nominated or appointed to an office.

6. Making or seconding a motion does not necessarily mean that the member favors the motion but only that he or she wishes to place the motion on the floor to discuss it.

Nominations And Elections

Nominations for an office can be made by nominations from the floor, nominations by petition, or nominations by a nominating committee.

Officers should always be chosen by ballot, even if the constitution does not so state. Such voting encourages an independent as well as a secret choice.

Generally, the *slate* should permit the voter to write in the name of a candidate if he or she does not approve of the selected nominees. This prevents a nominating committee from having restrictive control over the candidates.

Balloting should continue until a majority vote has been received by one candidate. No name should be removed from the list even though one or two should obviously be out of the running. Unless the nominee chooses to withdraw, nominations do not need to be seconded. Nominations may be closed by a motion requiring a two-thirds vote or, if there are no further nominations, the *Chair* may declare nominations closed.

Types Of Votes And Voting Methods

The following are types of votes that are used in meetings:

- MAJORITY—More than half the votes cast in elections and on most motions. Note that a majority does not mean more than half the members present but of the votes cast—some members may not care to vote.
- TWO-THIRDS—⅔ of the votes cast; used with motions only.
- PLURALITY—More votes than any other candidate; used only in elections when the assembly wants to save time. When electing a committee of three, the three nominees with the greatest number of votes will be considered elected.
- GENERAL CONSENT—This is a shortcut in voting. It permits the assembly to take action without going through the process of a regular vote. This method should be used with all motions on which there seems to be a general agreement among the members. It is an excellent time-saver and should be used at every opportunity. For example, "If there are no objections, we will vote by ballot; *(pause)* No objections? We will vote by ballot." In this way, a group may quickly express its opinion. If someone does object, the *Chair* must put the motion to a regular vote. "All those in favor of voting by ballot say Aye, etc. . . ."

The methods of voting include:

- Acclamation or voice—"Aye" or "No"
- Show of hands
- Rising
- Secret ballot (used mostly for elections)
- Secret roll call ballot (sign names)
- Roll call vote (members respond when name is called)

When the word *division* is stated by a member, he or she is requesting that another vote be taken on a motion. Generally, this is done whenever a vote by acclamation fails to show clearly whether the vote was affirmative or negative. After division is called, the method of voting should be one which can be observed by all, such as raising hands or rising.

The chairperson should strive to be as impartial as possible, voting only if it will change the result. The *Chair* may vote to *break a tie* and cause the motion to carry, or vote to *make a tie* and cause the motion to lose.

When the vote is public (by acclamation, rising, etc.), the *Chair* should vote, if he or she chooses to do so, after the assembly has voted and after the results have been made known to the *Chair.*

When the vote is secret (by ballot), the *Chair* should vote when the assembly votes; then he or she cannot vote again to change the results.

The secretary has the right to vote at any and all times. The performance of secretarial duties does not prevent the exercise of this right.

Important Words And Phrases

Accepting A Committee Report—To accept a committee report means that the assembly supports the action of the committee. The motion is made as follows: "I move we accept the committee's report." Most committee reports need not be accepted because they require no action; they should be received, not accepted. A report is received as follows: "I move that the report be received as read." Sometimes *adopt* is used in place of accept.

Acclamation—A voice vote made by stating "Aye" or "No."

Adopt—To pass or carry a motion; to approve a committee report.

Appeal The Decision Of The Chair—An incidental motion. Any member disagreeing with the chairperson's decision may put the matter to a vote by the assembly. It is in order even when another member has the floor and often arises out of a point of order. The member rises saying, "I appeal the decision of the *Chair*." If it is seconded, the chairperson states his or her decision and allows limited debate—one statement from each member. He or she then says, "All those in favor of the *Chair's* decision, say Aye..., etc." A tie vote sustains the *Chair's* decision.

Are You Ready For The Question?—"Are you ready to vote on the motion?"

Bylaws—Generally, the bylaws comprise all of the rules by which a group is governed. The rules may be divided into three classes: constitution, bylaws, and standing rules. The constitution and bylaws are usually considered one-and-the-same in most organizations. They are of such importance that they should not be changed except after suitable notice is given to the members and then only by a vote larger than the majority of those voting.

Convene—To call the meeting to order.

Debate And Discussion—Debating or talking about a motion or question.

Division—Count the vote again. It may be requested by any member after the chairperson has announced the outcome of a vote when the count is not definite, generally after a voice vote. The member does not have to be recognized nor does he or she have to rise when calling "Division".

Filibuster—The act of speaking for the purpose of keeping the floor and preventing the opposition from getting a chance to speak. It uses up the time allotted for a motion to be considered.

Fix The Time For The Next Meeting—The highest privileged motion. It is in order at any time and usually sets the time for the next meeting.

Has The Floor—When a member has been recognized by the *Chair*, he or she has the floor. Only in rare instances should a member be interrupted. He or she may yield the floor to someone else.

Majority—More than half the votes cast.

Meeting—An assembly of a group's members; when the members separate only for a short recess.

Method Of Voting—An incidental motion. It provides the type of vote desired on a motion, such as a vote by rising, roll call, or by secret ballot.

Previous Question—A subsidiary motion which means *to close debate*. If passed, it stops discussion and puts the pending motion to a vote. It is not debatable or amendable and requires a two-thirds vote.

Objection To The Consideration Of A Motion—An incidental motion. The purpose of this motion is to avoid the consideration of a motion that is undesirable or impractical. It is usually applied to a main motion and must be made immediately after the main motion is opened for discussion and before any amendments are made to it. It can be made when another has the floor, and it requires no second, no debate, and no amendments. The chairperson says, "An objection has been made to the motion; shall we consider the motion?" The vote must be two-thirds in the negative to dismiss the main motion and sustain the objection.

On The Floor—A motion is *on the floor* when it is being considered by the assembly.

Orders Of The Day—The scheduled program of business; used most often in conventions and sometimes called the agenda of business.

Pending Motion—Any motion on the floor being discussed but not yet disposed of. Several motions may be pending at one time.

Proxy—This is a power of attorney by which Mr. A authorizes Ms. B to act in Mr. A's absence. Proxy voting is not recommended for ordinary groups of volunteer members. It is designed for representative assemblies and stock corporations.

Putting The Motion—To vote on the motion.

Question—When a member calls, "Question," he or she means "I am ready to vote on the motion." It does not close discussion but expedites it.

Questions Of Privilege—A privileged motion; more accurately called a point of privilege and concerned with the welfare of the assembly. A member states, "Chairperson, I rise to a question of privilege." The *Chair* asks the member to state his or her point. The member states, "I should like to have the windows opened," or "I should like to introduce my guest," or "I should like to have the gentleman withdraw his comments about Mr. A." The *Chair* then makes a decision about the point. It requires no second, is in order when another has the floor, is not debatable or amendable, and requires no vote. It may be appealed.

Quorum—The number of members required to transact business legally. The number is usually a majority of the membership unless otherwise specified in the constitution.

Receive A Report—To receive a report means to hear it or listen to it; it does not mean that the assembly approves the report or takes any official action on it. Since most reports are reports of information, it is reasonable "to receive the report as read," instead of adopting or accepting the report. Receiving the report also recognizes work which has been completed.

Recognition—A member is recognized by the chairperson when the latter announces the member's name or, in small groups, simply nods. A member obtains recognition by raising a hand, rising, and in some cases calling, "Mr. or Ms. Chairperson." No member should speak or make a motion until recognized by the presiding officer.

Repeal—When the group desires to change a former action, the motion to repeal is in order. It must be made when the floor is clear. It is debatable, amendable, and requires a two-thirds vote. If sentiment is strong, the motion may include the words, "and strike from the records." If carried, the secretary writes on the repealed motion: "Stricken from the records by order of assembly," and then dates the motion.

Session—A series of meetings, such as a convention.

Standing Rules—Regulations governing the time and place of meetings.

Suspend The Rules—An incidental motion used in urgent cases to save time. This motion is not debatable or amendable and it requires a two-thirds vote.

Unanimous Ballot—A ballot cast by the secretary for a candidate who is the only person nominated for an office. No objection is made. This method should not be used when the constitution requires an office to be filled by ballot since it does not permit any negative votes. The constitution should be amended to permit the use of the unanimous ballot. The usual form is to have the chairperson instruct the secretary, if there are no objections, to cast a unanimous ballot for the candidate. If objections are made, the ballot must be used.

Withdraw A Motion—An incidental motion permitting a previous motion to be withdrawn. If the maker of a motion refuses to withdraw the motion, it cannot be withdrawn. Any member may move to withdraw a motion but the maker of the motion must agree to the withdrawal of his or her motion. If the motion to withdraw is made before the chairperson states the motion for the assembly, only the maker and seconder need to agree upon the withdrawal. If the motion to withdraw is made after the chairperson states the motion for the assembly, the maker and the entire assembly must be consulted for its withdrawal.

Yield The Floor—A member who has the floor may yield the floor to another member. In so doing, the former surrenders his or her right to continue speaking at that time.

County Rural Development Committee
Plan Of Action Guide

(Attach copy of minutes of committee meeting at which the Plan of Action was adopted.)

_____ _____

County Chairman

List below major problems and/or projects planned or in the process of being worked on during the calendar year (some projects may be long-term and carried over from one year to the next).

Project	Who within the committee is responsible for the action (agency, subcommittee, organization, or individual)?
1. _____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
2. _____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
3. _____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
4. _____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
5. _____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
6. _____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

(Use additional pages if necessary)

List below any assistance that might be needed from district or state offices of the Rural Development Council or other state and federal agencies or organizations.

Assistance Needed	Agency/organization that might be of help
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

The Alabama Cooperative Extension Service
AUBURN UNIVERSITY

CIRCULAR CRD-35

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